

in a free society. I believe mothers and fathers in the Middle East want to raise their children in a free and peaceful world. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. I will never forget the voices of those in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I will never forget the police or firefighter coming out of the rubble who grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do

not let me down." Ever since that day—ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I have been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at Hershey Park Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Corbett, candidate for Pennsylvania State Attorney General; Jean Craig Pepper, candidate for Pennsylvania State Treasurer; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania October 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It seems like yesterday I was here in Wilkes-Barre. Come to think of it, I was. [Laughter] I figure if I keep coming back, I'll meet everybody in town.

I'm coming back because I want you to know how important your vote is. That's why I'm here. We're close to voting time. I've come back to tell you how important your help is in this election. Find your friends and neighbors. Convince them to go to the polls on November the 2d. Do not overlook discerning Democrats, people like Senator Zell Miller. And remind your friends and neighbors, if they want safer America, a stronger, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I regret that Laura is not traveling with us today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, that is generally the reaction—[laughter]—kind of like, "Why didn't you stay home and let her come?" [Laughter] You know, we were in the same grade at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. That would be the seventh grade. And then I became reacquainted with her when she was a public school librarian. [Laughter] And when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" "Promise me I'll never have to give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that

promise. She's giving a lot of speeches. And when she does, the American people see a warm, compassionate, great First Lady.

I love traveling with my daughters on the campaign trail. There's nothing better than being with somebody who, well, tells you to keep your tie straight. *[Laughter]* "Don't spill your food before you get out there and talk to the people." *[Laughter]* You know, I used to tell Barbara and Jenna that one of these days we'll go on a camping trip together, the great family camping experience. I'm sure they envisioned the Colorado River or somewhere. Well, darling, this is it. This is the great—*[laughter]*. We're traveling this country asking for the vote, and I'm glad Barbara is by my side.

I spoke with our great Vice President this morning. His spirits are high. He's working hard. I admit that Vice President Cheney does not have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. *[Laughter]* I picked him because of his experience, his sound judgment, and his ability to get the job done for the American people.

I'm pleased to be sharing the platform with Congressman Don Sherwood. He's doing a great job. And Congressman Jim Greenwood is traveling today. He comes up from the suburbs of Philadelphia. I'm proud to have his support, and I'm proud to call him friend. Thanks for coming, Congressman.

Specter is out there working on behalf of his own campaign, and Santorum is out there working for mine. They're two fine United States Senators. I hope you put Arlen Specter back in office.

I want to thank all the State and local officials. I want to thank Jean Craig Pepper for being here, the candidate for treasurer of the State. I appreciate people who are running for office. I want to thank my friend Sammy Kershaw, country singer.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people putting up all the signs, making the phone calls, writing the letters. I'm here to thank

you for what you're going to do as we're coming down the stretch. There is no doubt in my mind, with your hard work and with your help, we will carry Pennsylvania and win a great victory in November.

With just 11 days left in this campaign—who's counting? *[Laughter]* Voters are focusing on the issues that matter most for their families and for our country. You've heard the debates. You know where I stand. Sometimes you even know where my opponent stands. *[Laughter]* You've had a chance to see both of us in action, to measure our consistency, our resolve, our values, and our ability to lead. This election comes down to five clear choices for the American families, five choices on issues of great consequence: your family's security, your budget, your quality of life, your retirement, and the bedrock values that are so critical to our families and our future.

The first clear choice is very important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threat to our country. The enemies who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous and determined to strike us again. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror, and in this war, there is no place for confusion and no substitute for victory.

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming our All-Volunteer

Army to make sure it remains an all-volunteer army. We are staying on the offensive.

And we are succeeding. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're after them. We are in a real war, and the only strategy must lead to victory.

My opponent has a different approach. He says that September the 11th, quote, "didn't change me much at all."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And that's pretty clear. He considers the war on terror primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. His top foreign policy adviser has questioned whether it's even a war at all, saying that's just a metaphor, like the "war on poverty." I've got news. Anyone who thinks we are fighting a metaphor does not understand the enemy we face and has no idea how to win the war and keep America secure. My opponent also misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists. He's called it a "diversion" from the war on terror. My opponent used to recognize Saddam Hussein as a threat. That's until he started to slide in the polls.

Saddam Hussein was a threat to the United States. He hated America. He had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. He had ties to terrorists. He was firing missiles at American pilots enforcing the sanctions of the world. He paid families of suicide bombers. He was a threat.

We didn't find the stockpiles that we thought were in Iraq, that I thought was there, that my opponent thought was there, that the United Nations thought was there, that the world thought was there. But I want you to remember—tell your friends and neighbors what the Duelfer report did find. It said that Saddam Hussein had the intent and capability and the expertise to rebuild a weapons program, that he was gaming the system, he was using the Oil for Food Programme to try to influence officials of other nations to get rid of the

sanctions. And why? Because he wanted the world to look the other way so he could restart his programs. That was a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Remember, my opponent called our action a "mistake." That's after he started slipping in the polls. [*Laughter*]

Iraq is still dangerous because terrorists there are trying to stop the advance of freedom and elections. A man named Zarqawi is responsible for planting car bombs and beheading Americans in Iraq. He ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan until our coalition forces destroyed that camp. He then fled to Iraq where he's fighting us today. To confirm where he's coming from, he recently announced his allegiance to Al Qaida. If Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting American forces in Iraq, does my opponent think they would be peaceful citizens of the world? [*Laughter*] Does he think they'd be opening a small business somewhere? [*Laughter*] Fighting the likes of Zarqawi in Iraq is not a "diversion" from the war on terror; it is the way we will win the war on terror.

When it comes to your security, the choice in this election could not be clearer. You cannot lead our Nation to decisive victory on which the security of every American family depends if you do not see the true dangers of the post-September the 11th era. My opponent has a September 10th point of view. At his convention, he declared his strategy was to respond to attacks after America had been hit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As we learned on September the 11th, it's too late to respond. In our debates, he said we can defend America only if we pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing right there when he said it. No, we'll work with friends and allies,

but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

For the sake of our freedom and for your security, we'll fight this war with every asset of our national power. We will protect America by striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And we will prevail.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We've got another powerful asset at our disposal, and that's liberty. And that's freedom.

I want the youngsters here listening to think about what has happened in a brief period of time, some 3½ years in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago in that country that young girls were not allowed to go to school, and their mothers were taken into the public square and whipped or sometimes taken to a sports stadium and executed because they refused to toe the line of the ideologues of hate, the Taliban, which ran Afghanistan. In working to secure ourselves, in ridding that country of terrorist camps, of upholding a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," we liberated over 25 million people in Afghanistan. And just a couple of weekends ago, millions of Afghan citizens voted in a Presidential election, and the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Freedom is on the march. That society has gone from darkness to light because of liberty, and America is more secure because of it. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies will not harbor terrorists. Free societies will be hopeful places where people can realize their dreams.

Iraq will have elections in January. Iraq is changing. Think how far that country has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers and the brutal reign of one man. I believe liberty has the capacity to transform societies and make the world a more peaceful place.

One of our friends in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi. I said "our"—I'm talking about Laura and me. He is—he's a good man. He's a person with whom I work. It wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with the Japanese. See, 60 years ago, we were fighting the Japanese. My dad was in that war. I'm confident many other people were in that war, or families represented here were—had fathers and grandfathers in the war against the Japanese.

After World War II, Harry Truman—after we won that war, Harry Truman believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. There were a lot of skeptics then. There were a lot of doubters, the Japanese—the enemy—could never become a democracy. "Why do we even want to help them," some would say. After all, they destroyed a lot of the U.S. lives. But there was faith and belief in the power of liberty to transform societies. And today, because of that belief, I sit down with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about keeping the peace that we all want, talking about dealing with the world's problems.

Someday, a duly elected leader from Iraq will be sitting down with the President of the United States of America, talking about the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

Freedom is on the march in this world. I believe everybody in the Middle East desires to live in freedom. I believe women in the Middle East want to live in a free society. I believe mothers and fathers want to raise their children in a free and peaceful world. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families, and I kept my word. To help our families, we doubled the child credit to \$1,000 per

child. We reduced the marriage penalty. Our Tax Code should encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent so working families, working Americans can keep more of their paychecks. We reduced income taxes for everyone that pays taxes. That's the fair way of doing things.

As a result of our policies, real after-tax income, money in your pocket that you can spend, is up about 10 percent since I took office. Because of tax relief, because we increased consumer spending and investment, our economy is overcoming the tough times we've been through.

Remind your friends and neighbors that when I got in office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months prior to our arrival. Then we were in a recession. And the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, cost us nearly a million jobs in the 3 months after the attacks.

But because we acted, this economy of ours is strong and it's getting stronger. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 3 months. The State of Pennsylvania has added 4,600 jobs in the month of September 2004. The unemployment rate across America is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average rates of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. And the new unemployment rate figure in the State of Pennsylvania released today is 5.3 percent.

My opponent has a very different plan for your budget. He intends to take a bigger chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the—he voted against a higher child tax credit. He voted against marriage penalty relief. He voted against lowering the tax rates. If his vote had prevailed, an average middle-class family would be paying \$2,000 more a year to the IRS.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a fact. It's also part of a pattern. See, the Senator voted 10

times to raise taxes on gasoline. All told, during his 20 years in the United States Senate, my opponent has voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's about five times a year. When he does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [Laughter] During his campaign, my opponent has made a lot of big, expensive promises. He promised about \$2.2 trillion of new spending. That's with a "T." [Laughter] That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? He's going to raise the top two brackets. There's three things—a lot of things wrong with it, but let me give you three right off the bat.

One is, by raising individual rates, you're taxing many, many small businesses. Seventy percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And by running up the top two brackets, you're taxing the job creators. And that's bad economic policy.

Secondly, there's a gap between what he's promised and what he can deliver. By raising the top two brackets, you raise about 600 billion to 800 billion dollars, and he's promised 2.2 trillion. So there's a gap, a gap between the promises and what he can deliver. Guess who gets to usually fill those gaps?

Secondly—or thirdly, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason when it comes to taxes. That's to slip the bill and stick you with it. But we're going to protect the family budgets; we're going to carry Pennsylvania and win a great victory on November the 2d.

When it comes to your budget, you have a clear choice. My opponent has earned—and I mean earned—his rank as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. He'll raise your taxes to fund bigger Government. I'm going to keep your taxes low. This is the road to prosperity. It's a road to economic vitality. Now, when it comes to taxes, he may try to run in a

camouflaged outfit—[laughter]—but he cannot hide.

The third choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. I believe a good education and quality health care are important for successful lives. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools, and I kept my word. We passed good education reform. We're raising the standards. We're making sure our schools are accountable, accountable to our parents. We're seeing progress. Math and reading scores are on the rise. We're closing the achievement gap all across this country. We will build on these reforms. We will extend them to our high schools so that not one single child in America is left behind.

We will continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and more accessible. We'll expand health savings accounts and create association health plans so small businesses can cover their workers, so more families are able to get health insurance plans they manage and they call their own. We'll help families in need by expanding community health centers. We'll make sure every eligible child is enrolled in our Government's low-income health insurance program.

To make sure health care is available and affordable for the American citizens, we're going to do something about the junk lawsuits that run up the cost of medicine and run good doctors out of practice.

Doctor Linda Barrasse is with us today, a cardiologist. She's got a group practice in Scranton. She's just like the docs I met yesterday in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Doctors are concerned about the quality of health care in Pennsylvania because of all these junk lawsuits. They're running good docs out of practice. There are too many ob-gyns being run out of practice and too many Pennsylvania women having to drive for miles to get the care they need and deserve. Linda talks about the—needing to close offices. They're having trouble

recruiting new doctors. Medical liability is an issue in the Pennsylvania. It is an issue across this country. It is a national problem that requires a national solution. I am for medical liability reform.

Senator Kerry has a different point of view on our schools and our health care system. Now, he voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, but now wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposed including measures like teacher attendance in the accountability measures to judge whether students can read and write and add and subtract. He voted against health savings accounts. He opposed association health care plans that would help our small businesses. He has voted 10 times against medical liability reform on the floor of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The other day, he said, well, he's for some kind of plan.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide.

He's proposed a big Government health care plan that would cause 8 million families to lose the private coverage they get at work and have to go on a Government plan. Eighty percent of the people who get coverage under his proposal would be enrolled on a Government program. You might remember one of our debates. He tried to tell the Americans when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." I could barely contain myself when I heard that. My opponent's plan would move America down the road to Federal control of health care, and that is the wrong road to take for American families.

In all we do to reform health care, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

Fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation made a solid commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and on Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. Leaders in both political parties have talked about strengthening Medicare for years. We got the job done. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting \$600 to help them with their prescription drugs this year, another \$600 next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drugs, even though it was supported by AARP and other seniors groups. During this campaign, he said, quote, "If I'm President, we're going to repeal that phony bill," end quote. Then, of course, later on, he said, "No, I don't want to repeal it." Sounds familiar. [Laughter] As your President for the next 4 years, I will defend the reforms we have worked so hard to pass, and we will keep the promise of Medicare for America's seniors.

We will keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors and strengthen Social Security for generations to come. Every election, politicians try to scare seniors about Social Security. It's predictable. In the 2000 campaign, they ran ads saying that, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." You might remember those ads. As you round up the vote, would you please remind our seniors, George W. got elected, and our seniors got their checks. And when I get elected this time, the seniors will still get their checks.

But I know today's moms and dads and grandparents are concerned about their children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. Someday, our youngest workers, of course, will retire, and we need to make sure Social Security will be there

when they need it as well. I believe younger workers ought to take some of their own money and put it in a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn a greater rate of return than a Social Security trust, a personal savings account they can call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He talks about protecting Social Security, but I want everybody to remember, he is the only candidate who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When it comes to the next generation, he has offered nothing to strengthen Social Security. American families have a clear choice in this election. My opponent wants to scare the seniors of today and do nothing to secure the system for seniors of tomorrow. I'll keep the promise of Social Security and Medicare and strengthen these great systems for our children and our grandchildren.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping America's families strong. Here, my opponent and I are miles apart.

I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, one of the most fundamental, most enduring, and most important institutions of our civilization. My opponent says he supports marriage, but his record shows he will not defend it. This isn't a partisan issue. The vast majority of Democrats, for example, supported the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as the union of a man and a woman—a bill which President Clinton signed into law. But Senator Kerry was a part of the far left bank, far left minority, that voted against that piece of legislation. I will always stand firm to protect the sanctity of marriage.

I believe it is important to work with people to find common ground on difficult issues. Republicans and Democrats, many citizens on both sides of the life issue, agreed we should ban the brutal practice

of partial-birth abortion. But Senator Kerry was part of a far left minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He also voted against parental notification laws and voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I will continue to——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I will continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent has said that you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. [*Laughter*] Most of us don't look to Hollywood as the source of values. The heart and soul of America is found right here in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our citizens, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. The decision is in the best hands because the decision belongs to the American people.

I believe in the future of this country. We see a great day for the American people. One of my favorite quotes was written by a Texan, a friend of ours. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side that sees the day

that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." My opponent has spent a lot of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that's coming.

We've been through a lot together. We've been through a lot together in the last years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we see the valley below. We'll protect our families. We'll build on their prosperity. We'll defend our deepest values. We will spread freedom and peace, and as we do, America will be safer here at home.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you honored me with this office, I would uphold the honor and the dignity. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. On to victory! Thank you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. at the Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in a Discussion in Canton, Ohio October 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Go ahead and be seated, please. We've got some work to do. Thank you all for coming today.

First of all, George, thank you for that strong endorsement. I am proud to have George in my corner, just like I'm proud to have thousands of Democrats all across

the State of Ohio who understand if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America to put me and Dick Cheney back in office. Thank you, sir.

I'm keeping mighty good company today. So I don't know if you know this or not, but Laura and I were in the seventh grade